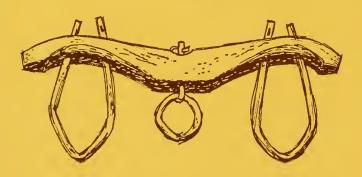
973.7L63 B2J72m Jones, Thomas D.

Memories of Lincoln

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MEMORIES of LINCOLN

By THOMAS D. JONES



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With Prefatory Note by
RUFUS ROCKWELL WILSON

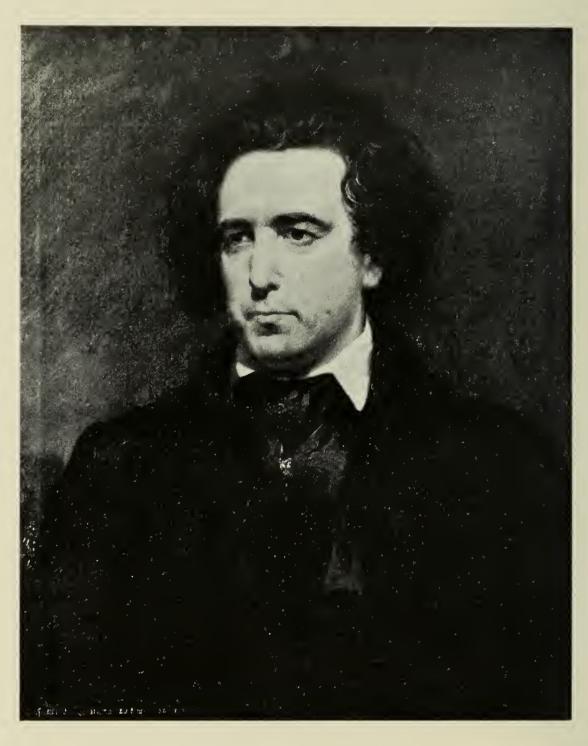
and reproductions of the author's two busts of Lincoln



The Press of the Pioneers, Inc.

New York

1934



PORTRAIT OF THOMAS D. JONES

PREFATORY NOTE

There were a number of sculptors and painters of skill and quality at work in this country during the seventh decade of the last century, but it is one of the ironies of history that only a few of them sought or made opportunity to execute first-hand busts and portraits of Abraham Lincoln. One of these was Thomas D. Jones, whose two busts reproduced in the following pages hold a place among cherished reminders of the outward seeming of the great war President.

Thomas D. Jones was born in 18c8 in Oneida County, New York, and early in life was first a stone mason and later a marble cutter, practicing the latter trade in Cincinnati. About 1846, without instruction, he began the modeling of busts in wood, stone and marble, and soon became widely and favorably known as a sculptor in Ohio and neighboring states, numbering among his sitters some of the most eminent men of his period. His busts of Thomas Ewing and Salmon P. Chase were later highly commended by John Q. A. Ward, a competent critic usually sparing in his praise of his fellow sculptors; and he also executed admirable busts of Henry Clay, John J. Crittenden, Thomas Corwin, Zachary Taylor, and Reverdy Johnson.

In the winter of 1860-61, as here recorded, Jones made the marble bust of Lincoln from life, now in the gallery of the New York Historical Society, and in 1864 he again modeled from life a bust in bronze, which he gave to his friend Addison T. Richards, then secretary to the National Academy of Design, and which in recent months has passed into the possession of a well-known Western collector. Lincoln cherished a warm regard for the sculptor, shortly before his death in 1865 recommending him for a consulate. Jones' intimate and delightful but little known recollections of Lincoln were first published in *The Weekly Union* of Sacramento, California, on November 4, 1871, and are here reproduced through the kindness of Harry McNeill Bland, whose splendid collection of Lincolniana is always instantly and cheerfully placed at the disposal of the inquiring student. Jones died in 1881 in Cincinnati where he had passed his closing years.

A writer in one of the issues of the Magazine of Western History for 1886 describes Jones as "a genial, courtly gentleman of the old school who lacked the money-getting instinct. He seemed always," we are told, "in rather straitened circumstances, but his rare familiarity with Shakespeare, and his knowledge of distinguished men made him socially delightful." An artist friend who knew Jones in his earlier years in Cincinnati adds a few revealing touches to this picture. "A man of positive talent, but showed in his work the lack of early training and art education. He was entirely original, had a great love and admiration for the heroic and classic in art, and in looks, dress and action was always dramatic. His long hair and piercing eyes, overshadowed by a broad brimmed hat, and the old Roman toga thrown over his left shoulder will ever be kindly remembered by those who had the pleasure and honor of his acquaintance or friendship."

The memories of Lincoln which Jones put on paper and which are here reproduced are of an intimate and appealing sort, and add to our knowledge of one of the critical periods in a great man's life. Especially welcome is the brief but vivid account of the gray February morning on which the President-elect took his departure for Washington. Lincoln's gift for the right word never had nobler expression than in the brief address—'the last and best speech,' as Jones declares, of his Springfield days—in which he bade farewell to his friends, and which may be quoted as a not unfitting conclusion to this prefatory note:

"My Friends: No one not in my situation can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or ever I may return, with a task before me greater than which rested on Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being whoever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

And on this high yet tender note Abraham Lincoln parted from the men and women among whom he had grown into greatness as naturally and inevitably as the acorn grows into the oak. When he returned to them four years and three short months later what the Greeks would have called his Destiny had already placed him among the Immortals.

R.R.W.

MEMORIES OF LINCOLN

By THOMAS D. JONES

(Sacramento Weekly Union, November 4, 1871)

AFTER the presidential election of 1860, I received a commission from Colonel R. M. Moore and others, of this city, (Columbus, Ohio), to proceed to Springfield, Illinois, to execute a bust of Abraham Lincoln. Accompanied by Colonel Moore we left on Christmas Eve, arriving late at night in Lafayette, Indiana, where on account of a heavy snow storm, we were compelled to remain until about noon the next day. A hundred miles of magnificent prairie to cross, a silent and frosted ocean; it was a glorious Christmas!

Just enough snow had fallen and mingled with the sun-dried grass to give the grand prairie the appearance of their boasted deserts of Oriental lands. It was a bitter, blustering and freezing day, and the escape of the steam from the locomotive had a magical effect on all the exterior portions of the train, particularly the windows. Clumps of trees seen in the distance had all the semblance of a group of Arabs, guiding their much-loved camels.

As the close of day was fast approaching, the weird appearance of the atmosphere was still more wonderful, and as owl light set in we safely arrived in Springfield.

Next day at a timely hour, armed with letters of introduction given us by Governor Chase, Hon. Thomas Ewing, and others, we presented ourselves at Lincoln's office, then located in the State Capitol of Illinois. Although surrounded by a few political friends he received us kindly, and it was rather flattering to our vanity, however, for he seemed to know us by intuition. As he was a prompt man, he lost no time in proceeding to business, and inquired how I made my busts. I gave him a brief description of my process.

"I like your mode; when Mr. Volk, of Chicago, made a bust of me, he took a plaster cast of my face, a process that was anything but agreeable." He appeared highly pleased with the idea that he was not to be assassinated through the custom of some sculptures in



BUST OF LINCOLN BY THOMAS D. JONES, EXECUTED IN 1861

taking a plaster cast of the face, which was very much in vogue in Europe a hundred years ago. A sculptor was once engaged to assassinate Napoleon the First in that way. The conspiracy was discovered in time to save the Emperor's life.

In a day or two my modeling stand and clay were set up, in a room engaged at the St. Nicholas, where I was to receive a sitting of an hour daily from Mr. Lincoln in the forenoon. It was impossible for him to be regular or punctual. Too many calls on him from all parts of the country.

The work once begun, he became a subject of great interest, but a very difficult study. His early mode of life and habits of thought had impressed hard and rugged lines upon his face, but a good anecdote or story before commencing a sitting much improved the plastic character of his features.

He received letters almost daily from the South on all sorts of subjects—some coarse, some witty, and others amusing. The most frequent inquiries of him were those on the subject of rail splitting—the best timber for rails, which end to split first—buttered or top end, all of which never disturbed the equanimity of his temper. They were as amusing to him as Artemus Ward's monkey. He was once favored with a piece of timber that interested him.

Having been, I thought, too frequently interrupted by some of Lincoln's curious friends and admirers I requested the clerk at the office of the hotel to tell such persons to wait in the sitting-room below, until Lincoln came downstairs. One of those friends of Lincoln did reach my studio one morning. Who do you desire to see? "Mr. Lincoln." As he wore a bottle green coat, and had a pair of grasshopper legs, I requested him to wait in the reading-room, as Lincoln would soon go downstairs and he could meet him there.

Lincoln seemed annoyed that I did not show him in. I told him I presumed it would be all right, as I requested the gentleman to wait until he was through with his engagement. Lincoln on going downstairs, sought the gentleman I had described; not finding him, he concluded to peruse the papers. While so engaged for some time, he looked up, and there stood the bottle-green specter close by and in front of him.

- "What can I do for you?" inquired Lincoln.
- "Don't you know me?" said the emerald individual.
- "I may have met you before, as I have thousands, but I cannot recall your former face at present."

"Yes, we met fifteen years ago, and I have been in California ever since, and brought this red wood gold-mounted cane as a slight token of our second meeting."

The body of the cane was made of the celebrated redwood, of California, and the handle or head of the cane was of generous proportions, and composed entirely of quartz and gold, highly artistic and in very good taste.

The above is only one of the many incidents of the kind that occurred almost daily, until Lincoln left for Washington. The bottlegreen imp remained in Springfield until he could accompany him.

One of the most amusing incidents during our pleasant intercourse happened as follows: A small box by express, to Lincoln's address, reached my studio, one morning; it was neither large nor formidable in appearance, but it looked suspicious. I suggested that he had better let me open it, as it might contain an infernal machine or torpedo. Neither did we soak it in a tub of water, or say many prayers over it. So placing it at the back of the clay model on which I was at work, using it as an earthwork, so in case it exploded, it would not harm either of us, I cut the strings, and out tumbled a pig-tail whistle, and a letter from that prince of good fellows, A. P. Russell, then Secretary of State of Ohio.

Calling at Lincoln's residence that evening, with a number of letters for him, I found Tad making the house vocal, if not musical, with the pig-tail whistle, blowing blasts that would have astonished Roderick Dhu. Any boy in the country knows how to make a bark whistle. Make a pig's tail whistle in the same way, only with more care. Materials might be made from a living pig, and the original owner might be called to his dinner by his own tail.

Not long after taking my first sitting of Lincoln, he commenced preparing his addresses to be delivered in the different cities through which he was to pass from Springfield to Washington. His speeches or addresses were very deliberately composed, in my room. I sharpened all the Fabers he required. He generally wrote with a small portfolio and paper resting on his knee, with a copy of his published speeches lying beside him for reference. After completing one of his compositions he would very modestly read it to me.

Presently the accomplished James E. Murdoch honored the citizens of Springfield with a professional visit, giving two readings. Lincoln attended both, apparently enjoying them with great gusto. So popular were Murdoch's readings that a complimentary was pro-

posed. Murdoch thought it necessary that Lincoln's name should lead the invitation, but how to get it was the question, for he resided a mile from the hotel. I proposed to call for it. Lincoln wrote his name on a small slip of paper, and I handed it to Murdoch to place at the head of the list of names. I have often wondered since whether Murdoch still preserves the little memento of that evening. As the entertainment was chiefly the works of Charles Dickens, nothing could have pleased Lincoln more, judging how heartily he laughed, and his wreathed smiles on that occasion are never to be forgotten. Both Lincoln and Charles Dickens have long since joined that noble band of immortals. God bless them!

Murdoch subsequently called at my studio to pay his respects to Lincoln, and it is needless to say before he left the room he did not fail to make a most patriotic speech for the times. I had seen Murdoch on the boards, and in our public halls, but never before was he one-half as eloquent as he was that morning in the presence of and to Lincoln.

I remarked to Lincoln, one day, that I was sometimes curious about a man's religious, as well as ethnological origin. "Well, what do you think of mine?"

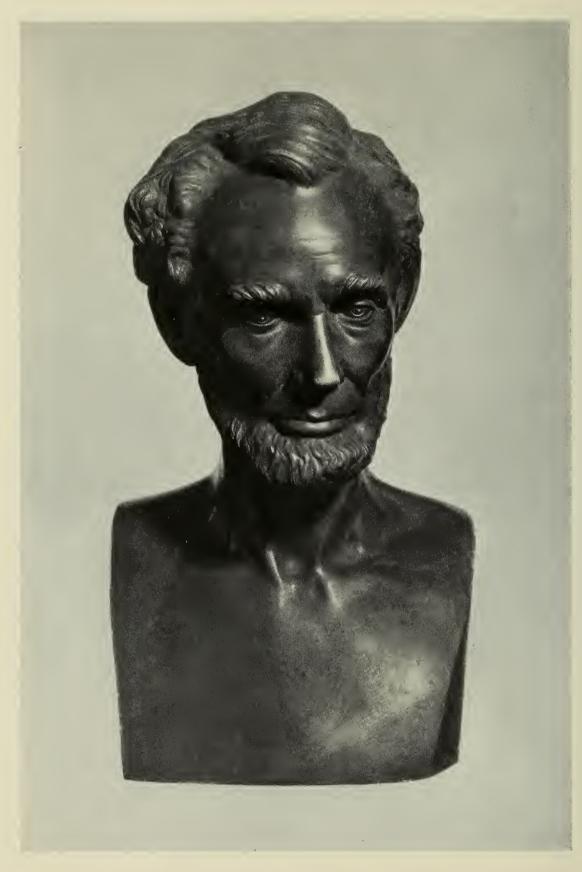
"Judging," I remarked, "from the peculiar characteristics of your face you originated from the Hardshell Baptist persuasion."

"You are right; my father was a member of the Baptist Church, but I am not."

He was a man that Pythagoras or Socrates would have admired most hugely, and those old Greeks would have said that he possessed two demons, two distinct souls, or spirits.

One day, while little dreaming of saint or sinner, who should I meet but the entertaining Oscanyan, an American by birth, but Mussulman by education. I had not seen him since we parted in his Turkish bazaar, in New York, some seven or eight years before. We had often dined together at the residence of Carlos D. Stuart, the popular song writer of the day. Oscanyan had called to see Lincoln as much as to entertain the public. Before dining he proposed a walk. We strolled out past ex-Governor Matteson's residence, which had cost over one hundred and forty thousands dollars, and contained a marble statue of Stephen A. Douglas by Volk. As he contemplated the dwelling with Oriental calmness, he inquired:

"Did the owner of that house build it himself, or was it erected by his fathers?"



BUST OF LINCOLN BY THOMAS D. JONES, EXECUTED IN 1863

"Neither, I believe, for I have been told it was built out of funds filched from the State of Illinois. But why do you ask, Oscanyan?"

"Because it reminds me of a story of Mourad Affendi and a rustic boy near Adrianople."

"Let me hear it."

"Mourad Affendi was in the habit of traveling throughout his empire incognito to see for himself whether his subjects were happy or miserable and his laws well administered. Meeting a handsome boy one day, he asked him whether he would like to see Constantinople. The boy replied that he would. When you arrive in Constantinople show the people this card, and you will be hospitably received.' It was not long before the boy began to dream of Constantinople, and went there, showing his card to every one he met. By his inquiring after Mourad Affendi, everybody laughed at him, until a gentleman had the curiosity to examine it, and at once saw that it was genuine. 'Do you see that fine palace yonder?'

"Yes,' said the boy. 'Show that card to the guard at the gate, and you will gain admission.' The boy was shown into the palace and recognized by his old friend. No sooner seated in Turkish style than he minutely noticed everything he saw. 'My son,' said Mourad Affendi, 'what is it that interests you the most?' 'Well,' replied he, 'I was just thinking whether you built this palace yourself, or was it erected by your fathers.' "

Lincoln and Oscanyan soon became warm friends. Both were modest, and very entertaining in their way. One was the rough diamond, while the other had all the polish of a Damascus blade, if not its keenness.

As Lincoln came in one morning with face all aglow, and beaming with benevolence and kindness, I remarked: "You appear so cheerful, you must have had a pleasant adventure on your way."

"I had a very agreeable one. As I came through the State House square I met an old friend. We were once fellow members of the Legislature of Illinois. I was a Whig in those days, and the Democrats were predominant. Scarcely a Whig measure could be advanced but my old friend would rise to his feet and oppose it.

"As the Whigs were tired of that amusement, or annoyance rather, when the first opportunity presented itself I caught the speaker's attention, and remarked that my Democratic friend reminded me of a scene that had occurred, several years before, on the Sangamon. Two old bachelor brothers resided in a log cabin at the

foot of a hill, which was crowned with a dense forest, a favorite place for hunting. One morning one of the brothers started over the hill to do a little shooting. He had not gone far before 'crack' went the rifle. In a few minutes more another shot was heard. The brother below concluded that some game had been secured; so he went over the brow of the hill. On reaching the top of the hill, he saw his brother 'drawing a bead,' as old hunters used to say, for another shot. No sooner thought than done. On reaching his brother sportsman, with rifle in hand, and loading for another fire, he inquired, 'Brother what have you killed?' The hunter replied by saying, 'I have been trying to shoot that squirrel up there, but he does not come down.' The other looked to for squirrel but seeing nothing of the kind, concluded that there must be something wrong with the hunter's mind. So scrutinizing his face, he looked into his eyes. All right—there was no maniac glance to be seen there. Next he thought he would examine the throbbing of the temples, which are sometimes indications of insanity, but there were none. It had so happened that the hunter brother had a pair of prominent and over-jutting eyebrows. On the extreme end of an extended hair of one of the brows was a large louse disporting himself. 'That brother, is your squirrel,' said he, and removed it. The hunter looked again, but saw no game in the tree-top, shouldered his rifle, returned to his cabin a wiser, if not a better man, never again to expend his ammunition until he was sure of his game."

Lincoln said his story was followed with roars of laughter, and his old Democratic friend would never speak to him again until that morning, on the State House square. Extending his hand: "Mr. Lincoln, we may never meet again (how prophetic!) and I would like to part good friends." "Certainly," said Mr. Lincoln, and the impress of that meeting was on his face when he reached my room. By that time considerable progress had been made on the bust. I said to him: "Mr. Lincoln, will you have the kindness to tell me what you think of the result thus far?"

Laying down his writing materials, he examined it very closely for some time. "I think it looks very much like the critter." Those were the exact words, and very like him at times, for he was not known to flatter.

Receiving his partial approbation at least, I concluded to invite some of his friends in to see the work. Next morning, who should drop in upon us but Master Robert Lincoln, familiarly called Bob in those days, asking his father to give him ten dollars, which Lincoln did without ceremony. When Master Robert was about to leave the room, I said to him: "As your fair cousin, Mrs. G. (who was a guest of the Lincoln's family at the time), is an accomplished woman, will you present her my compliments, and tell her that I would be pleased to have her call and see your father's bust, this afternoon; and you have gallantry enough, I know, to accompany her."

Master Robert promised to do as much, but unfortunately, it turned out to be a rainy and sleety afternoon. Having been a voter in seven States, I frequently received envelopes, post marked, of official proportions, if not from official men, requesting me to see that those colossal missives be delivered to Lincoln in person, and placed in his hands. I did not run the postoffice, but did much of that kind of work.

Almost every evening I had occasion to call at Lincoln's residence and did so with pleasure for two reasons: First, for that was the excuse, to deliver letters from my friends to the President-elect; second, to study him by gas-light, and see whether I could discover any new phase of character since morning. The evening following Master Robert's promise to accompany Mrs. G. to my studio, I had a very formidable looking package to deliver. As I entered the center of the parlor from the hall, on the left side sat Lincoln, as usual, reading or writing. Mrs. Lincoln had entered the folding doors, right hand side. I had paid my respects to Lincoln just before Mrs. Lincoln came in.

"Ah! Mr. Jones," bowing much lower than usual for her, than was her custom, "I have a crow to pick with you."

"I am very sorry, madame, for the crow is an ominous bird. But the crow?"

"You could send your compliments to Mrs. G., as a lady of taste, but not a word to me."

"Very true, Madame, and the only apology I have to make is, that I have called to present my invitation to you in person, and will be most happy to see you in my studio." She thanked me, but never called.

The broad smile and radiant humor of Lincoln's face at the time, paid me well for my visit. The next morning, while engaged upon one of his reception speeches, he looked up:

"Mr. Jones, what was that you said to Mrs. Lincoln, last evening?" I repeated it. "I thought it was good at the time," said he and went on with his writing.

At this time my studio was Lincoln's only retreat from the pursuit of numerous applicants for office, where he could compose his addresses in peace. Such men as Governor Chase, and others, came by invitation, and Lincoln saw them in their private rooms at the different hotels.

About two weeks before Lincoln left Springfield for Washington a deep-seated melancholy seemed to take possession of his soul. While James Buchanan, sitting like Cerberus at the gate, would neither do, nor let others act, South Carolina had already seceded, and other States (were) preparing to do the same damnable deed. The great problem with Lincoln at the time was, How to enforce the laws in the true spirit of the Constitution without the shedding of blood. During those two weeks he made not a single threat, apparently resigned to his fate, as a martyr prepared for the stake. The former Lincoln was no longer visible to me. His face was transformed from mobility into an iron mask.

Anecdotes of Lincoln during his residence in Springfield were numerous. I will give only one, as it will interest both ladies and gentlemen. While Lincoln courted Miss Todd, he and Douglas were rivals for her hand. For some reason or other, and a woman always has a reason, Lincoln was discarded. The description of the effect it had upon him as it was told me by one of the actors that was present at the scene, I shall never forget. Several of Lincoln's friends feared that he would become insane, (that is the word), if not already mad. Finally Miss Todd was prevailed upon to see Lincoln. She consented. As an old friend of both related the incident: "We put them both in a room together and let them fight it out," and Lincoln was victorious.

What a strange destiny that of those two men—Lincoln and Douglas—both were rivals in love and politics, and both died martyrs in their great devotion to the cause of the Union.

Lincoln's keen perception of the ridiculous enabled him to enjoy an anecdote or story better than most men, and he treasured them too. While in a photograph gallery one morning, posing him for some pictures he desired to present a very dear friend, I tried to recall two lines of A. J. H. Duganne's "Parnassus in Pillory," written by him twenty years ago. All I could remember ran as follows:

"Endymion Hurst, whose head, Unlike his books, is red." They pleased him better than I anticipated, and I rehearsed them several times until they were fixed in his memory.

We generally opened the ball in the morning with two or three anecdotes, each, and then went on with our work in silence. Should a story or anecdote not be clearly impressed upon his mind the next day he would ask me to repeat it. He had a remarkable memory of events, of language, of persons and things, but not of names. Desiring to illustrate something, one day, by telling an anecdote, to Judge Swain, he said: "Judge, what is that man's name in Ohio that makes mud heads?" "Jones." "You are right; that reminds me of one of his stories."

Soon after reaching Springfield, I attended one of Lincoln's evening receptions. It was there I really saw him for the first time to please me. He was surrounded by his nearest and dearest friends, his face illuminated, or in common parlance, lighted up. He was physically an athlete of the first order. He could lift with ease a thousand pounds, five hundred in each hand. In height six feet four inches, and weighing one hundred and seventy-six pounds. He was a spare, bony, lean and muscular man, which gave him that great and untiring tenacity of endurance during his laborious administration.

Mentally he reasoned with great deliberation, but acted promptly as he did in all his rough and tumble encounters in the West. His arms were very long and powerful. "All I had to do was to extend one hand to a man's shoulder, and with weight of body and strength of arms, give him a trip that generally sent him sprawling on the ground, which would so astonish him as to give him a quietus."

Well he might "send him sprawling." His great strength and height were well calculated to make him a peerless antagonist. Get any man out of the balance, and he will lay down of his own gravity. His head was neither Greek nor Roman, nor Celt, for his upper lip was too short for that, or a Low German. There are few such men in the world. Where they came from originally is not positively known. The profile line of the forehead and nose resembled each other. General Jackson was one of that type of men. They have no depression in their forehead at that point called eventuality. The line of the forehead from the root of the nose to the hair above comparison is slightly convex. Such men remember everything and forget nothing. Their eyes are not large, hence their deliberation of speech; neither are they bon vivants or bald-headed.

Lincoln was decidedly one of that class of men. His habit of thought and a very delicate digestion gave him a lean face and a spare figure. He had a fine head of hair until the barbers at Washington attended his toilette. Twelve men out of thirteen wear their hair parted on the left side of their heads—why? Because nearly all our barbers use their right hand in their profession instead of the left.

Before the public Lincoln was a very grave and earnest man; in private, kind, modest, and replete with wit and humor. He never told a story for its zanyism, but purely for good humor, illustration, or "adornment of his speech," as Rabelais would say. As an evidence of Lincoln's kindly nature in domestic life, an old milkman called to see his bust. He said he had served Lincoln with milk for several years; that Lincoln would walk over to his place in the morning barefooted with a little milk bucket in one hand, and his oldest boy sitting astride of his shoulders, chirping like a bird.

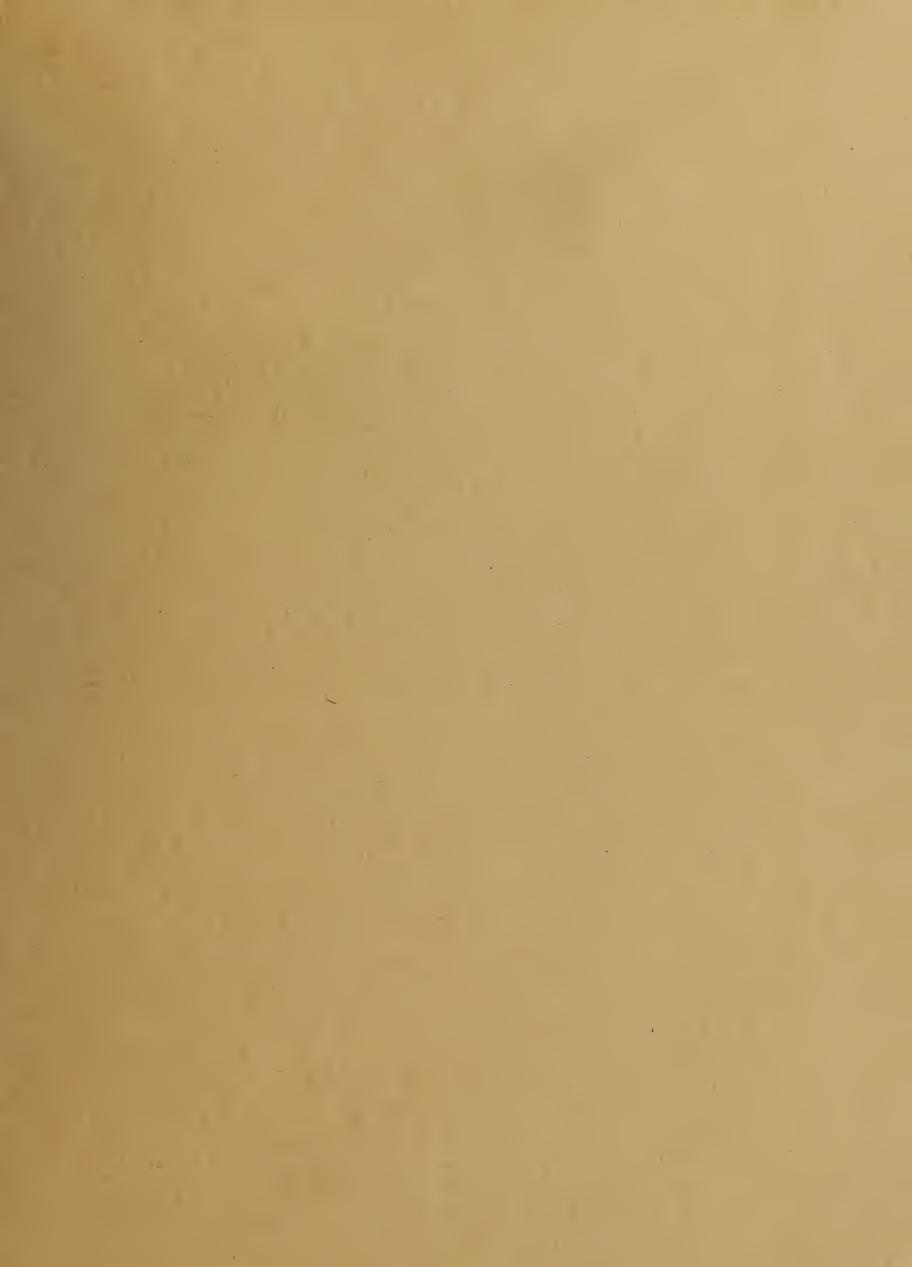
The day at length arrived when Lincoln was to take his departure for Washington. It was a dark, gloomy, misty morning, boding rain. The people assembled early to say their last good-bye to the man they loved so much. The railroad office was used as the reception room. Lincoln took a position where his friends and neighbors could file by him in a line. As they came up each one took his hand in silence. The tearful eye, the tremulous lips and inaudible words was a scene never to be forgotten. When the crowed had passed him, I stepped up to say good-bye. He gave me both his hands—no words after that.

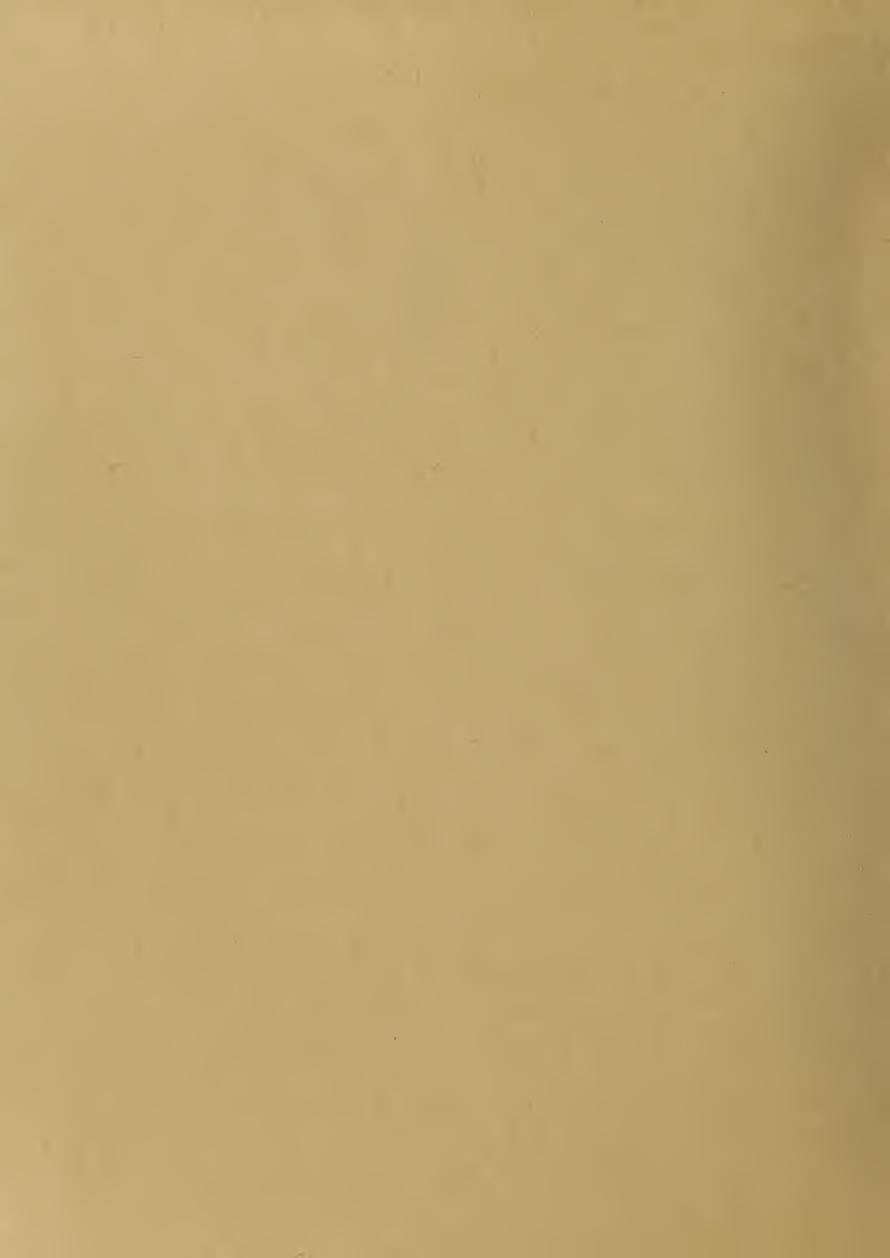
The train thundered in that was to bear him away, and Lincoln mounted the rear platform of one of the cars. Just at that moment Mrs. Lincoln's carriage drove up—it was raining. I proffered my umbrella and arm, and we approached Lincoln as near as we could for the crowd, and heard the last and best speech ever delivered in Springfield.

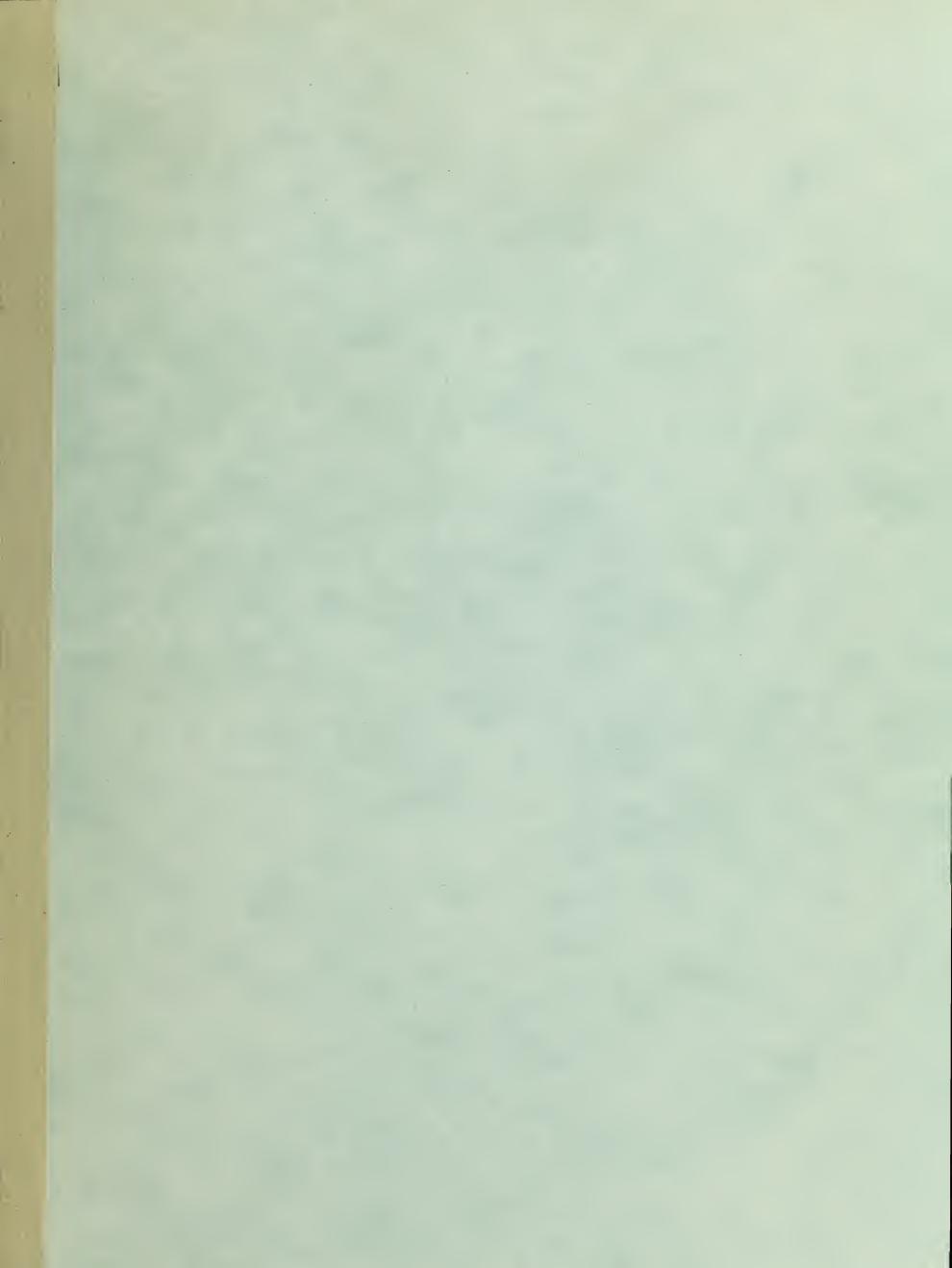
(See Prefatory Note)











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